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Illinois In the War

An Address to
The Commercial Club of Chicago
By
SAMUEL INSULL, Chairman
THE STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE
OF ILLINOIS

JANUARY 18, 1919

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Illinois In the War

The State Council of Defense of Illinois is a liquidating—almost a liquidated—concern. Hence, what I am to say may be considered as a forecast of some aspects of a final report to the shareholders. These shareholders are the people of Illinois, for the Council has tried, at least, to be representative of the patriotism and effort of all our people.

In this we have followed the lead of Governor Lowden. From the first, he set a pattern of undivided loyalty and unfaltering devotion to the cause of America. He did not seek to curry favor with either pacifists or hyphenates by soft speaking. Nor did he recognize politics or partisanship as a factor in the prosecution of the war. He did not conceal his convictions nor camouflage his attitude.

Governor Lowden not only set the State Council an example to follow, but he made our work infinitely easier than it would otherwise have been. Frankly, if we had not had him as our bulwark, and also as the pioneer in what we undertook to do, our difficulties would have been tremendous, and we might not have overcome all of them.

With Governor Lowden to lead, it is our belief that Illinois made a record in the war in which all make take a just pride. Let me sum up for you some of the state's achievements—not in wearying detail, but in gross totals.

First, the men our state furnished to fight the war, for the men who do the fighting rightly come first. Under the selective service act, Illinois registered a total of 1,559,586 men of fighting age—646,480 on June 5, 1917, between the ages of 21 and 31 years; 44,106 youngsters who had just come of age on June 5,

1918; 689,000 on September 12, 1918, boys between the ages of 18 and 21, and men between the ages of 31 and 45.

Illinois put into the national service a total of 314,504 men and boys—24,663 in the Navy; 3,678 in the Marines; and 286,163 in the Army. The figures for the Army are to the end of the war; those for the Navy and the Marines are up to June 30th only; the several thousand volunteers who entered the service as officers through the various training camps are not included. But even these incomplete figures show that Illinois furnished for the defense of the nation in the great war 57,207 more men than it did for maintenance of the union in the four years of the Civil War.

Another interesting fact is, that while the selective service act was adopted almost as soon as America was in the war, 56.6 per cent of the men who went from Illinois—178,143—volunteered, and only 43.3 per cent—136,361—were inducted into service under the draft law.

Next, money. To finance the war, the United States has borrowed on bonds and war savings stamps, in round numbers, \$19,000,000,000. Of this sum, Illinois furnished in round numbers, \$1,300,000,000—more than \$1,209,000,000 for Liberty Bonds and the remainder for War Savings Stamps. In other words, with about 5.5 per cent of the population of the United States, Illinois has taken virtually 7 per cent of the nation's war loans. This sum is once and a half times the value of the great crop (the greatest of any state in the union) which we raised last year.

Illinois has given, as well as loaned, her money for the war. The total collections of the various war aid and relief organizations of which a record has been kept runs well above \$42,250,000. This is within \$7,750,000 of the total of all state appropriations for the two-year period of 1917 and 1918. In other words, in the eighteen months we were at war, the people of Illinois voluntarily assessed themselves about once and a half as much per year for war aid and relief as they are assessed for state taxes.

This money was given as follows:

Red Cross	\$16,165,100
Y. M. C. A.....	4,896,187
Salvation Army	781,941
United War Work.....	13,935,452
War Recreation Board.....	550,000
Under State Council licenses.....	6,000,000

This last sum is partly estimated; it was money collected for local aid of all kinds, and our figures show it was all collected with an overhead charge of less than 10 per cent. These figures do not include the very generous first contribution to the Knights of Columbus, nor the fees of the two Red Cross membership drives.

Another of the great contributions of Illinois was in the products of the field—crops. Estimates of the Department of Agriculture show that the 1918 farm crop was third in volume in the history of the state, and the greatest in money value ever produced by any state in America—\$879,679,000. Iowa comes second, with a crop valued at \$821,920,000; Texas is third—\$175,000,000 behind Illinois.

It was a war crop in the strictest sense, planted and apportioned according to a predetermined program. The government asked for more wheat, and Illinois responded with 60,991,000 bushels, an increase of 70 per cent over the 1917 crop, which was twice that of 1916; for more barley, and Illinois raised 4,750,000 bushels, twice the crop of 1917; for more rye, and Illinois raised 3,800,000 bushels, nearly five times the 1917 crop. Our oats crop was 244,000,000 bushels, or 45,000,000 bushels short of the 1917 crop; and our corn crop of 351,450,000 bushels was 68,000,000 below the great crop of 1917, but because of early frosts in 1917 the corn crop of 1918 (Providence must get the credit for this, not our farmers or the State Council) has once and a half the feeding value of the 1917 crop. And it should be remembered that the crop of 1917—the largest of any state that year—was also a war contribution of Illinois.

While we were making these contributions directly to the

war, we also continued to do our part in the manufacturing field. Notwithstanding the drain upon the man power of the state, Illinois, in 1918, turned out manufactured products valued at \$6,000,000,000—\$3,943,000,000 in Chicago, the rest down-state. Of these, about \$2,000,000,000 worth were on direct war contracts, but virtually all were war contributions, for Illinois factories are not largely given to the production of luxuries or non-essentials.

If you will add to this staggering record of the production of Illinois in a war year, the great production of our coal fields and oil wells, figures for which I cannot give you now, when the details are finally written, I think they will reflect credit upon every industry, and virtually upon every individual, in the state.

This great achievement of Illinois, gentlemen, represents more than fertile fields and wide-spread industries; it represents a state of mind, civilian morale, and team work. The State Council of Defense—unlike political parties, which sometimes lay claim to the beneficence of sunshine and rain—claims no credit for the fact that our fields are fertile, nor because we have established industries directed by enterprising men. But we modestly hope that we helped to bring about the state of mind, the civilian morale and the co-operation which enabled Illinois, not merely to do well, but to do almost her best while America was at war. And I believe that had the war not ended when it did, we would have done quite our best this year.

What the Council set out to do was to direct the energies of the state wholly to essential war work, to accustom the people to the necessities of the war and to prepare them for its sacrifices. In this we followed the directions of the national government generally, but when occasion required, the Council took the responsibility of pointing the way.

Let me cite an instance. At our very first business meeting, on May 8, 1917, the Council passed a resolution urging upon Congress the immediate enactment of "a rigid food, fuel and commodity act that will vest in a commission, to be appointed by the President, full power to control the production, distribution, transportation and price of food-stuffs, grains, fuel and other

basic commodities." Bear in mind that at this time the Lever bill had not been introduced. The public knew little of what such regulation meant. Probably the bill would have been introduced sooner or later anyway, but our Council was the first official body to demand such a law, and our action at least helped to prepare the public mind for the regulation which later occurred, which all now admit was essential, and which the people accepted without a murmur.

Again, starting while the Lever bill was pending, it was the Illinois Council which took the lead in getting the Fuel Administration established—through its own action and the action of the Governor, as well as the joint action of thirteen middle-west states—almost as soon as the Lever bill became a law.

But, I repeat, our greatest value was in preparing the people for their war duties, and in getting public acceptance of war conditions and war demands, rather than in advising the national government of its obligations. We undertook to help the government get done the things it wanted done, instead of telling it how to run the war. It was for this that we built up our great organization—and, if I may be allowed to say so, it was a great organization. We had fifty thousand active workers, distributed through all the counties down-state, and 30,000 more in Cook County, not counting the 300,000 women Mrs. Bowen had under her committee, which was attached to the State Council of Defense.

Our Council took the requests of the national government as orders; in turn, our county organizations regarded the requests of our Council as orders. Let it be said further, that the people in each community—the men and women throughout Illinois—were mindful of the suggestions which came to them from the Council itself or from our county organizations. Thus, we had the whole state working upon a common plan to achieve a common purpose.

I do not say it as a boast, gentlemen, but it is my firm belief that it was because these 80,000 active members of the State Council organization—leading men and women in their commu-

nities everywhere—were amenable to orders, and because the 300,000 women of Mrs. Bowen's organization, not only obeyed instructions themselves, but were continuously preaching sacrifice and discipline—it was because of this that Illinois was enabled to make the war record it did. Acceptance of the draft law, of the restrictions on food and fuel, of the food production program, of amusement curtailment and longer working hours, the contribution of money in unheard-of amounts—all these things were done not only without protest but heartily. And I do not believe they would have been done with such good feeling, if at all, had not the public mind been organized for their acceptance. If the State Council did anything in this war, it organized the public mind.

Let me cite another instance, this time of the team work achieved in Illinois by means of our state-wide organization. On September 17, 1918, the national government called upon the State Council to help shut off non-war construction work, so that all the energies of the nation might be devoted to essential war work. Within thirty days, eighty-nine of our one hundred and two counties had established non-war construction boards, and when the end of the war came—only fifty-five days after the creation of the bureau—non-essential construction work to the amount of \$13,873,000 had been deferred until after the war, and few people even complained about it.

Again, the national government in August last called upon the Council to regulate deliveries by the stores of Illinois, to induce people to carry home their own parcels, and to limit Christmas presents to useful things. This looked like a tough job, but within sixty days the merchants of every town of 2,000 or more inhabitants in Illinois, including Chicago, had limited their deliveries to one a day; women everywhere, who had never done so before, were carrying home their own parcels, and the merchants themselves, in every town of the state, were appealing to their patrons, in the name of the State Council, to buy only useful gifts for Christmas, and to buy those early. Besides, there was a board in virtually every town to see that these rules were enforced.

Another manifestation of our team work was the organization of the Volunteer Training Corps, now converted into Reserve Militia. The absorption of the National Guard by the United States Army left Illinois practically without protection against the internal disorder, which the nation at war might invite. In response to the request of the Council, nearly 15,000 men—largely men exempt from the national service—enrolled in the Volunteer Training Corps, uniformed themselves and used their spare time for training. When they became fit and competent troops, they were converted into Reserve Militia—six regiments of them, with one company or more in every considerable city of the state—and are now, under the direction of the Adjutant General of the state, equipped and qualified to perform any service which may be required of them.

It was organization of the public mind, also, which made possible our enormous sale of Liberty Bonds, and our great contributions to the Red Cross and other war aid organizations, and it was organization of the minds of the farmers which made possible the great crop I have mentioned. The Council helped the farmers plan the program which brought it about, helped to provide the labor which planted and harvested it (21,000 lads from the cities and towns who were trained and sent out by the U. S. Boys' Working Reserve, among other agencies), and the Council even provided the seed for a good part of our corn crop.

Some of you know already that the Council, indirectly was a seed-corn purchasing agency for Illinois. The Chicago banks backed us with a pledge of \$1,250,000 for that purpose. We borrowed only \$495,000, with which, together with our seed corn propaganda, we not only saved the corn crop of Illinois but made a profit of more than \$140,000 for the national Department of Agriculture—which became our partner in the enterprise at a late day, and took all the profits.

Which brings me to a fact which I think is unique in the histories of all our state councils of defense throughout the country. Gentlemen, in addition to whatever it did to help win the war, the State Council of Defense of Illinois was a money-making

institution. We cost the people of Illinois money, to be sure—between \$150,000 and \$175,000. Fifty thousand dollars of this the Legislature gave us, and the rest we secured by passing the hat—chiefly here in Chicago. It is our intention not to ask the state for any further sum. But notwithstanding this, we really made money for the people of the United States—made around \$450,000, or nearly three times what we cost the state—in legitimate, patriotic enterprises—enterprises which we believe did a great deal of good in themselves, besides being profitable.

In addition to the \$140,000 we made out of seed corn, and turned over to the government, we also made over \$300,000 out of our Patriotic War Show on the Lake Front. We have turned over to the Committee on Public Information \$300,000 already (I very much regretted having to do so, but under the Congressional enactment there was nothing else for us to do), and will have another small check. In fourteen days 1,955,602 people attended the show, and I am sure its value in arousing patriotic sentiment was great indeed.

We also made over \$8,000 out of our Patriotic Food Show last January, despite two of the most terrific blizzards Chicago has had in thirty years, and, besides, that show served as a model for more than 250 like shows throughout America. We sold more than 300,000 copies of the recipe book we got out for the show, distributing them from Britain to China, at five and ten cents a copy, and made a profit of over \$7,500 out of that cook book.

Had we been able to keep all we made, we should now be turning money back into the state treasury, despite our small appropriation of \$50,000, whereas other states had appropriations running from \$100,000 for the smaller ones to \$5,000,000 in one instance, and \$2,000,000 and \$1,000,000 in others.

As we thus turned the State Council of Defense to actual, honest and legitimate profit, I wonder, gentlemen, if the people of Illinois may not turn the war itself, and what it taught us, to actual, legitimate profit? I do not mean, in any sense, to profiteering.

Consider the great Illinois crop of 1918. It was just the

crop the needs of the world demanded; a crop calculated to bring the highest market price. We grew it because the federal government made known the demands of the war and the leading farmers of the state got together and laid out a program which would meet these demands; because the farmers of the state counseled together, and after that worked together, to achieve a common purpose. The farms were short-handed, the state's greatest crops was threatened for lack of seed, it was hard to get planting, cultivating or harvesting machinery, or fertilizer. Despite all this, the state raised its most valuable crop in history, and did it easily, because the needs of the time imposed an obligation to do so. Co-operation, team-work, was accomplished as a matter of course, when the safety of the nation required it.

The same thing occurred in every other industry. Why, there wasn't a strike of importance in the state after the war started. All war undertakings succeeded by virtue of this spirit of co-operation. A billion and a quarter dollars' worth of Liberty Bonds were sold in Illinois through team-work. Co-operation achieved our contributions to war aid and relief. Look what happened in the United War Work drive! The widest differences in our country, or in any other, are religious; yet in that drive we found the Y. M. C. A., the K. of C., the Jewish Welfare Society and the Salvation Army passing the same hat and dividing the collection. And no one grumbled—much.

If we could achieve this unity of thought and purpose under stress of war, why can't we do it in time of peace? We proved that team-work served best when the nation was in peril; are we going to forget the lesson now that the peril of the war is past?

I hope not, for remember, gentlemen, partiotism is but a higher development of team-work. Americanization—which is such a common term in these days—is only the conversion of the foreign-born to applied co-operation. To Americanize our citizens of foreign birth or ancestry is simply to bring them to the realization and acceptance of an American program for the good of America, and to work to that program.

Upon this question I desire to say a further word. You can-

not get team-work, gentlemen, if the people of the team speak different languages. I mean this literally. A confusion of tongues is the simplest and most effective method for defeating a common purpose yet discovered; it was the method employed by Jehovah himself to accomplish that end. And as long as we have a confusion of tongues in America, we cannot hope to get that complete co-operation which means Americanization.

In the nature of things, we cannot entirely avoid a multitude of tongues in the first generation of those who come to America as a refuge of the oppressed or a land of opportunity for the enterprising. Therefore, it is futile to talk of complete Americanization of the first generation of the foreign-born. Such talk is futile—and I am not sure but that it is undesirable—for another reason also. For let me tell you that however well an immigrant may come to love America, however well he may come to understand and however highly he may come to value American institutions, he isn't going to forget the land of his birth. He can no more do that than he can forget the mother who bore him. He cannot forgo all affection for his homeland—the soil itself, the companions and kin with whom he grew up, and the customs of his youth—even if he would.

While this is true, and while to think of abolishing our confusion of tongues in the first generation is hopeless, there is no reason why we should go on maintaining and propagating this babel of languages through the second, and even the third and fourth, generation. Yet that is what we are doing—in the foreign-language schools of America. It is these which most need to be Americanized, in behalf of a sound and enduring patriotism.

I have no objection to the teaching of foreign languages in American schools. I do object to foreign-language schools in America. A foreign-born family in America begins with two—the husband and wife. We may find it difficult always to make good Americans of these, because they lack our language. But the children of a foreign-born family, usually from four to ten—why should we deliberately make them poor Americans by allowing them to acquire their educations in a foreign tongue? The language in which a child learns the elementaries of education—

the three R's, common grammar and fundamental history—is the language in which he comes to do his thinking. You don't help to make a good American citizen of a child by bringing him up to think in a language which is not the common language of his country.

We can't make a foreign-born citizen a good American by law. But we can make the schools of Illinois American by law, and thereby make it easier for those born here to be good Americans.

The State Council of Defense thinks this should be done. The Council believes it would be the longest step in Americanization it is possible to take. Hence, to round out its work, the Council will recommend this step to the General Assembly at Springfield. And if that recommendation shall be translated into law, it is our belief that to have made it will not be the least service we have rendered Illinois.



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